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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY

International Year of the Family

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 44/82 of 8 December 1989, proclaimed 1994 as the International Year of the Family. In its resolution 45/133 of 14 December 1990, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to finalize a draft programme for the preparation and observance of the Year for consideration by the Commission for Social Development and the Assembly. At its forty-sixth session, the Assembly adopted resolution 46/92 of 16 December 1991, in which it approved for implementation the proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Preparations for and observance of the International Year of the Family"; 1/ and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-third session on the state of preparations. In the same resolution, the Assembly also decided to consider the question of the International Year of the Family, on the basis of a report of the Secretary-General, at its forty-eighth session.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to that decision of the General Assembly. It updates the information contained in the Secretary-General's report to the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-third session, entitled "State of preparations for the International Year of the Family", 2/ and should be read in conjunction with that report. Reference should also be made to the Secretary-General's earlier report entitled "Progress made in the preparations for the International Year of the Family" (A/46/362), which summarized the state of preparations for the Year up to mid-1991.

II. CONCLUSIONS

3. Further to the proclamation of 1994 as the International Year of the Family by the General Assembly, an intensive and coordinated preparatory process has been carried out to facilitate the achievement of the Year's objectives. The process began with the appointment by the Secretary-General of a Coordinator for the Year and the establishment of a small organizational secretariat in June 1990. The central focus of the process has been catalysing local and national level actions on behalf of families through the coordinated efforts of as many partners as possible at all levels. Its basic elements have been dissemination of information on the objectives and substantive orientation of the Year, provision of support, as necessary, and fostering collaboration, exchange and coordination.

4. Substantive direction and guidance for the preparatory process was provided by the successive sessions of the General Assembly as well as the Economic and Social Council and the Commission for Social Development, which are the coordinating and preparatory bodies for the Year, respectively. Other intergovernmental bodies and meetings also contributed to the process, including the Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the four regional and interregional preparatory meetings for the Year.

5. The preparatory process has established a minimum framework of organizational arrangements, activated significant numbers of crucially important partners, set in motion a series of substantive and promotional activities around the world and mobilized some valuable resources.

6. At the national level, at least 102 countries have established national coordinating committees or similar mechanisms for the Year; national programmes for the preparation and observance of the Year have been initiated in more than 90 countries, while more than 90 Governments have designated national focal points to liaise with the secretariat for the Year. In many countries, the preparatory measures have resulted in a commitment to long-term strategies in support of families. For many developing countries, the Year offers an opportunity to reinforce a people-centred, sustainable and integrated approach to development, while for many of their developed counterparts, it serves as an occasion for a fresh look at the traditional view of the welfare state. Specifically, there is a consensus that a focus on families provides a framework for an integrated and comprehensive approach in social policy, an operational approach to sustainable development in all its forms and a much needed counterforce to fragmentary approaches to societal issues. Special attention has been called to refugee families, families implicated in wars as well as civil or ethnic strife, extremely poor families, families with heavy caring burdens, single-parent families and individuals who are victims of domestic violence, abuse or exploitation, notably children and women.

7. National efforts are being supported through specific measures at the regional and international levels. A crucially important measure has been the holding of four regional and inter-regional preparatory meetings for the Year, which developed specific action-oriented policy and programme recommendations regarding families and the Year's observance and follow-up. The regional commissions of the United Nations are playing a lead role in activities at the regional level.

8. At the international level, an impressive array of non-governmental organizations are major actors and important partners in the preparation and observance of the Year, reinforced by the non-governmental organizations committees on the family in Vienna, New York and Paris as well as several other concerned groups of voluntary organizations. The non-governmental sector has embarked on a major global initiative of holding a "World NGO Forum on Launching the International Year of the Family", to be held at Valletta from 28 November to 2 December 1993. Several intergovernmental organizations are making significant contributions to the Year. The participation of research and academic institutions has been intensified and many have launched new initiatives for the Year.

9. Within the United Nations system, 34 offices, bodies and specialized agencies, including the regional commissions, are involved in the preparation and observance of the Year, whose efforts are coordinated through the mechanism of ad hoc inter-agency meetings on the Year. Three meetings have been held and a fourth one is scheduled. These meetings initiated several joint projects. A joint inter-agency statement on the Year was recently issued by these organizations.

10. The secretariat for the International Year of the Family, which now forms part of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, has served as a catalyst, facilitator and coordinator of action. Despite severe resource constraints, it has set into motion a concerted substantive and promotional campaign and has provided organizational and substantive support to numerous initiatives in all parts of the world. It has also been successful in

mobilizing some resources and in-kind contributions for the Year's preparation and observance, from Governments, private sector firms and individuals. More than US$1.7 million has been raised in contributions to the Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the Family and numerous projects of direct benefit to families supported, using the resources of the Fund.

11. The preparatory process has also succeeded in promoting and anchoring the objectives and orientation of the Year and has resulted in a crystallization of the substantive concerns regarding families. At early stages of preparations, some concerns had existed as to the impact of supporting families and family life on the accomplishments regarding the equal rights of women. It was also feared that the Year might impose a standard definition of the family and promote a specific family model; and that the Year, by stressing the rights of families, might neglect their important responsibilities. These fears have now been abated by the focus of the Year's activities, among others, on the promotion of equal and full enjoyment of human rights of all family members, both within the family context and the society at large, its broad approach to all forms of families; and its equal emphasis on rights and responsibilities. A clear sense of the global nature of many family issues has also evolved, highlighting the need for regional and international cooperation. Decisive measures are considered essential to offset the varied and strong pressures which are undermining the capacity of families to meet the basic needs of their members and contribute to the development of their communities and society.

12. Moreover, several elements of international consensus regarding families have now clearly emerged. These include: (a) the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State; (b) there exist various concepts of the family in different social, cultural and political systems; this also includes a recognition that, despite the variety of family forms within and between societies, families are basic to the social structure and development of all societies and exhibit many common problems around the world; (c) gender equality, women's equal participation in employment and shared parental responsibilities are essential elements of modern family policy; (d) families are the fullest reflection, at the grass-roots level, of the strengths and weaknesses of the social and developmental welfare environment, and as such offer a uniquely comprehensive approach to social issues; and (e) families, as basic units of social life, are major agents of sustainable development at all levels of society, and their contribution is crucial for its success.

13. The significant achievements of the preparatory process, however, should not be reason either to ignore some basic problems or to lose sight of some daunting challenges ahead in ensuring that the hitherto progress will effectively materialize in a successful observance of the Year. For example, in a number of countries, notably those in conditions of war or national and ethnic strife, no action has yet been taken for the observance of the Year and the danger persists that in several countries the International Year of the Family may pass away without having been of any particular significance to families. Also, a perennial shortage of funds and staff for the secretariat for the Year can only negatively affect the process.

14. The following three measures are considered essential for the International Year of the Family to achieve its objectives in the short and long term:

(a) Intensive efforts at all levels for the observance of the Year. The preparatory process has set in place the organizational, substantive and promotional background for an effective observance of the Year, with its focus on national and local levels. It is imperative that Governments promote and facilitate the actual observance of the Year at these levels, with the full participation of all segments of society. In order to support national action, selected complementary measures at the regional and international levels are also necessary;

(b) Continued support for national activities on behalf of families. The increased activities in support of families at the national level, generated by the observance of the Year, will also engender the need for continued support for national activities favouring families. Specific areas requiring support are policy and programme development and implementation, institutional development, research and family law. They also include exchange of information and expertise, the provision of technical support and mobilization of resources to finance family-oriented projects and activities;

(c) Follow-up to the Year and the development of long-term strategies to guide future action in support of families. The Year should be an important starting-point of a long-term process. Its short- and long-term results should be monitored. The development of long-term strategies regarding families, which should focus on actions at the national and local levels, with appropriate and effective regional and international support mechanisms, ought to contribute to building up a family-friendly environment in the process of sustained and sustainable development.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS MADE BY THE PREPARATORY AND COORDINATING BODIES AND OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODIES

A. Commission for Social Development

15. The Commission for Social Development, the preparatory body for the Year, at its thirty-third session, reviewed the state of preparations for the Year on the basis of the Secretary-General's report dated 21 December 1992. 2/ It recommended to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, the adoption of draft resolution VI. 3/ By that resolution, the Assembly would decide that, beginning in 1994, 15 May of every year shall be observed as the International Day of Families; to devote one of its plenary meetings at its forty-eighth session, in early December 1993, to launching the Year; and to devote two plenary meetings at its forty-ninth session, in 1994, to the implementation of the follow-up to the Year and designate those meetings as an international conference on families, to take place at an appropriate global policy-making level. It would also request the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States of the Commission for Social Development on the desirability to work out a declaration on the role, responsibilities and rights of families on the occasion of the Year; and to plan adequate resources, including staff, in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, with a view to ensuring effective observance of and follow-up to the Year.

16. In that resolution, the Assembly would urge Governments, specialized agencies, regional commissions and intergovernmental and non-governmental

organizations to intensify the efforts undertaken, including the identification of national coordinating mechanisms and elaboration of national programmes of action, to prepare for and observe the Year. It would welcome the active involvement of non-governmental organizations in the preparatory process, including the major global initiative to convene a world non-governmental forum on launching the Year, to be held at Valletta, Malta, from 28 November to 2 December 1993 and call upon all those concerned to support the event in every possible manner.

17. The preparatory body expressed its appreciation to the Secretary-General for a well-coordinated and impressive effort in the preliminary and preparatory phases to the Year and for the considerable progress made towards its observance. It commended all Governments, specialized agencies, regional commissions and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations which have undertaken special efforts to prepare the observance of the Year. It noted with satisfaction that the Year had gained increasing support at all levels, and that the preparatory process has enhanced and strengthened the substantive orientation of the Year. It welcomed the holding in 1993 of four regional and interregional preparatory meetings for the Year. The preparatory body also noted with interest the proposal by the Government of Slovakia that the Bratislava International Centre for Family Studies be affiliated with the United Nations.

18. During deliberations of the preparatory body, many representatives of Governments expressed satisfaction with the achievements of the preparatory process for the Year, as illustrated by the growing momentum and action at all levels. Several representatives described extensive plans or actions undertaken to prepare and observe the Year. Further information on national level activities is contained in section IV.A, below.

19. Representatives reaffirmed the pivotal role of families in society. The need to recognize the importance of families and to develop concrete and long-range approaches to support them in fulfilling their role was stressed as critical objectives of the Year. Also stressed was the importance of recognizing the diverse forms of families and changing patterns of family life. It was pointed out that policies and society should remain open to the diverse forms that families could take. Special attention was called to the situation of single-parent families and traditional extended family structures. The rights of individual family members were frequently mentioned and attention was called to the changing roles of men and women and the situation of children in families. Relationships within families should provide a foundation for the equality of men and women in society, and should be promoted through the Year. The family was also an important mechanism to cultivate respect for human rights as well as racial and religious tolerance. Several other key issues and priorities for the Year were identified, which included child care, preparation of youth for family life, inter-generational relations, balancing work and family responsibilities, health and nutrition, poverty and income security, migrant families and domestic violence. Families and family concerns should be more fully integrated into broad socio-economic development strategies. The Year was viewed as a starting-point for long-term strategies in support of families at the national level and as an opportunity for concerted long-term action, also at regional and international levels. The importance of United Nations involvement in a sustained initiative for families was reaffirmed.

B. Economic and Social Council

20. At its regular session of 1993, the Economic and Social Council, the coordinating body for the Year, reviewed the recommendations of the preparatory body and approved its draft resolution VI for transmission to the General Assembly. Most speakers reaffirmed their active support for the Year and described new elements of their national programmes of observances.

21. The Council also approved draft resolution II, 3/ recommended by the Commission for Social Development for transmission to the General Assembly, by which the Assembly would adopt the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, which include a specific rule on family life and personal integrity.

C. Commission on the Status of Women

22. At its thirty-sixth session, the Commission on the Status of Women adopted resolution 36/1, 4/ entitled "Advancement of women and the family", in which it recommended to the Commission for Social Development that it take account of a number of elements when preparing for the International Year of the Family.

23. In its resolution 46/92, the General Assembly requested the Commission for Social Development to keep the Commission on the Status of Women informed of the preparations for the Year. Pursuant to that request, the text of draft resolution VI, entitled "International Year of the Family", which the Commission for Social Development recommended to the Economic and Social Council for transmission to the General Assembly, was made available to the Commission on the Status of Women, at its thirty-seventh session.

D. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

24. At its eleventh session, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women considered the International Year of the Family and agreed to use its analysis of article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as a contribution to the Year. In its comments on article 16, 5/ the Committee observed that family violence was one of the most insidious forms of violence against women and that within family relationships, women of all ages were subjected to violence of all kinds, which put women's health at risk and impaired their ability to participate in family life and public life on a basis of equality. In the general comments of its "General recommendation 19: Violence against women", 6/ the Committee noted that the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women included the right to equality in the family. In considering ways and means to expedite its work, the Committee regarded that research was needed on the causes and the long-term effect of the development of female-headed households. It further observed that such work could also serve as a basis for the Committee's recommendations for the International Year of the Family and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

25. At its twelfth session, the Committee was briefed by the Coordinator for the International Year of the Family on its preparations. The Committee noted with appreciation their level and quality. It expressed concern that, in many

societies, the family was facing pressure on account of economic and social problems, including drugs and crime. It noted that in some countries, focus was placed on the elimination of discrimination within the family between boys and girls and on the role of women in educating the children.

E. World Health Assembly

26. The World Health Assembly, at its forty-sixth session, adopted a resolution on the International Year of the Family. The Assembly urged all Member States to give effect to the objectives of the Year in the health sector, including the strengthening of inter-sectoral collaboration in support of the goals of health for all as a crucial means for meeting the health and other development needs of families; to determine, in collaboration with other sectors, which families are at risk of not being able to meet the basic needs of their members, and to develop or strengthen coordinated support to such families; to undertake operational research on approaches to enhancement of the health, nurturing, caring and development functions within the family; and to ratify and implement such international instruments as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child as vehicles for family health development. It further urged the Director-General of the World Health Organization to provide support to Member States, with other organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, for research on methods for measuring and evaluating the impact of policies and programmes on the health and functioning of the family and its members, and for determining which families are at risk of not being able to provide for the basic needs of their members; and to examine the cost, benefits and social implications of a greater involvement of the family in health promotion, disease prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, with particular emphasis on equity and on sharing of family responsibilities.

IV. PREPARATORY MEASURES

27. Various preparatory measures of organizational, programmatic, substantive and promotional nature have been carried out for the observance of the Year by Governments, organizations of the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, research and academic community and the private sector. A review of the preparatory process at the national, regional and international levels until end of November 1992 is contained in the report of the Secretary-General. 2/ This section updates that information and provides a brief overview of the major preparatory measures.

A. National level

28. Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 44/82, 45/133 and 46/92, all Governments were invited to take three specific organizational measures in preparation for the International Year of the Family: to establish a national coordinating mechanism; to formulate a national programme; and to designate a national focal point to liaise with the secretariat. As may be seen from the following list, as at 20 July 1993, 102 countries have established national coordinating mechanisms; national programmes have been formulated in 92

countries; and 94 Governments have designated national focal points. Seventy-five countries have taken all the three measures, 24 have taken two of the measures, while 15 countries have taken one measure. It should be noted that the data is not definitive, because some countries may not yet have informed the secretariat of their actions.

Status of preparations for the International Year of the Family as of 20 July 1993

Albania a/, b/, c/
Antigua and Barbuda a/, c/
Argentina a/, c/
Armenia c/
Australia a/, b/, c/
Austria a/, b/, c/
Bahrain a/, b/, c/
Bangladesh a/, b/, c/
Barbados a/, b/, c/
Belarus a/, b/, c/
Belgium a/, b/, c/
Benin a/, c/
Bolivia a/, b/, c/
Brunei Darussalam a/, b/, c/
Burkina Faso b/, c/
Cameroon a/, b/, c/
Canada a/, b/, c/
Chile a/, b/, c/
China c/
Colombia a/, b/, c/
Congo a/, b/
Costa Rica a/, b/, c/
Côte d'Ivoire a/, b/, c/
Cuba a/, b/, c/
Cyprus a/, b/, c/
Czech Republic a/
Denmark a/, b/, c/
Dominican Republic c/
Ecuador a/, b/, c/
Egypt b/, c/
El Salvador a/, b/, c/
Equatorial Guinea c/
Ethiopia a/, b/, c/
Finland a/, b/, c/
France a/, b/, c/
Germany a/, b/, c/
Ghana a/, b/
Greece a/, b/, c/
Guinea a/, b/
Guyana a/, b/, c/
Holy See a/, b/, c/
Honduras a/, b/, c/
Hungary a/, b/, c/
Iceland a/, b/, c/
India a/
Indonesia a/, b/, c/
Iran (Islamic Republic of) c/
Iraq a/, b/, c/
Israel a/, b/, c/
Jamaica a/, b/, c/
Japan b/
Jordan a/, b/, c/
Kyrgyzstan b/
Kuwait b/, c/
Lao People's Democratic Republic c/
Lebanon a/, c/
Lesotho b/, c/
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya a/, b/, c/
Lithuania a/, b/, c/
Luxembourg a/, b/, c/
Madagascar a/, b/, c/
Malawi a/, b/, c/
Malaysia a/, b/, c/
Maldives a/, b/, c/
Malta a/, b/, c/
Mauritania b/, c/
Mauritius a/, b/, c/
Mexico a/, b/, c/
Morocco a/, b/, c/
Myanmar b/, c/
Namibia a/, c/
Nepal a/, c/
Netherlands a/, b/, c/
New Zealand a/, b/, c/
Nicaragua c/
Nigeria a/, b/, c/
Norway a/, b/, c/
Oman a/, c/
Panama a/, b/, c/
Papua New Guinea a/, b/, c/
Philippines a/, b/, c/
Poland a/, b/, c/
Portugal a/, b/, c/
Republic of Korea a/, b/
Romania a/, b/, c/
Russian Federation a/, b/, c/
Rwanda b/, c/
Saint Kitts and Nevis a/
Saint Lucia a/, c/
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines c/
Saudi Arabia a/, c/
Senegal a/, b/ c/
Singapore a/, b/ c/
Slovak Republic a/, b/, c/
Slovenia b/
South Africa a/, b/ c/
Spain a/, b/ c/
Sudan a/, b/ c/
Sweden a/, b/ c/
Switzerland a/, b/,c/
Syrian Arab Republic a/, b/ c/
Thailand b/, c/
Tunisia a/, b/ c/
Turkey a/, b/ c/
Uganda b/, c/
Ukraine a/, b/ c/
United Arab Emirates a/
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland a/, b/
United Republic of Tanzania a/, b/, c/
United States of America a/, b/, c/
Uruguay a/, b/, c/
Venezuela a/, b/, c/
Zaire a/, c/
Zambia a/, b/, c/

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a/ Designation of a national focal point for the Year.

b/ Formulation of a national programme of action for the Year.

c/ Establishment of a national coordinating committee for the Year.

29. In addition to the above information on organizational measures, in the course of the preparatory process, numerous countries provided the secretariat for the Year with details on their national plans of action as well as other activities related to the Year and family issues. Since the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General, 2/ which described national plans and activities in 59 countries, 33 other countries provided information on their plans and activities, while many others reported on progress made and the expansion of existing national plans.

30. Based on the information made available, an Inventory of National Action for the Year was published by its secretariat in December 1992. A revised edition of the Inventory will be published in late 1993 to reflect recent information.

31. In most countries, national coordinating mechanisms for the Year have been established at the senior governmental level, often in close association with several national ministries, with one of them assuming a lead role. Several are headed by the head of State or Government. In many countries, they have the active participation of non-governmental organizations, the private sector, the academic community, the media and prominent personalities. A large number of national coordinating mechanisms have established working groups, subcommittees or complementary mechanisms to deal with particular aspects of the planned observances or to work with specific sectors in the national setting, such as coordination with the non-governmental sector. In a number of countries, coordinating mechanisms have also been established at the sub-national level and even at the level of local communities.

32. National programmes for the Year encompass a broad range of priorities based on national assessments of the problems confronting families. Priority issues identified by Member States for special attention in the context of the Year include poverty; unemployment of family members and barriers to participation in the labour market; balancing work and family responsibilities; the rights of children; the abuse, neglect, impoverishment or exploitation of children; the role of men in families, particularly regarding the care of children; the division of domestic responsibilities; gender equality and the situation of women in families; equal educational opportunities for all family members; domestic violence; ethnic conflicts and racial tensions; migrant and refugee families; families with special needs, such as those with caring responsibilities for elderly members or those with disabilities; housing; nutrition and food security; sanitation and health; family planning; erosion of family-based support networks, notably extended family forms; increasing rates of divorce; urbanization; the impact of economic restructuring and adjustment processes; and natural calamities and environmental degradation.

33. The national plans of action contain specific measures to address the priorities identified and often include: (a) a research component, involving such activities as specific studies, a programme of funding for research in family issues, refinement of data in official statistics, publications programmes or expert group meetings; (b) a policy component, which may involve publicizing existing policies and programmes, a review of existing policies affecting families, identification of policy "gaps" on family issues or concrete plans to develop and implement new policies; (c) a legislative component, which could involve a review of existing legislation, proposed legislative reform or

the enactment of new laws designed to strengthen and support families; (d) public education components, which might involve seminars, special documentary media presentations or campaigns, bulletins or other information services; (e) support for local initiatives through facilitative services such as planning or promotional tools, funding programmes, organizational assistance, information exchanges or network building; (f) specific measures for special needs groups, including information materials in braille and cassette form, or in minority languages; (g) a private-sector component, which could involve publicizing existing corporate policies to benefit families, promoting policy-building related to such questions as family leave, flexible working arrangements or workplace day care and fund raising; (h) promotional and awareness-raising elements, such as posters and information material based on the official emblem of the Year, media or other special events, family day observances, issuing a special stamp, stamp series, or commemoration coin, publications programmes, contests, art exhibits and specific campaigns geared for the workplace, government offices, schools or other settings; and (i) professional development aspects, often geared to groups with a direct helping role for families with problems such as school or workplace counsellors, family therapists, social workers, educators, community development or family planning specialists, and medical personnel.

34. In many countries, concrete programmes and services have been undertaken to assist families, which include family life education for youth, establishment of family counselling centres, enhancement of existing services or benefits, enactment of new family legislation or policies and establishment of governmental bodies specifically concerned with family issues. National action plans include specific provisions for evaluation and follow-up to the Year, including long-term plans for ongoing policies and support to families.

35. In several countries, efforts have been made to develop and implement the plans for the Year and the family in close coordination with other relevant national action plans, the implementation of international conventions and instruments such as the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women; 7/ the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future; 8/ the Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s; 9/ the Global Strategy for Health for All by the Year 2000; 10/ as well as the national preparations for forthcoming international events, such as the International Conference on Population and Development; the World Summit for Social Development; and the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace.

B. Regional level

36. In support of national and local activities and to provide further impetus for them, several preparatory measures at the regional level have been taken and several others are currently under way. The regional commissions of the United Nations play a lead role in this regard, in close cooperation with the secretariat for the Year and in harmony with a number of regional intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well as the regional offices and affiliates of international organizations that are engaged in preparations for the Year.

37. A crucially important measure has been the four regional and interregional preparatory meetings, initiated by the secretariat for the Year, in order to review the situation of families, identify regional priorities and formulate specific recommendations regarding policies concerning families and the observance of the Year. The Secretary-General addressed a special message to the participants of these meetings. Three such meetings have already been held and preparations for a fourth meeting finalized, as described below.

38. The United Nations Africa and Western Asia Preparatory Meeting for the International Year of the Family was held from 29 March to 2 April 1993 at Tunis. It was organized by the secretariat for the Year in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), at the invitation of the Government of Tunisia. It was attended by representatives of 30 States members of ECA, seven States members of ESCWA and by observers for one other State, and by representatives of United Nations system organizations and specialized agencies as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The Meeting adopted a political statement of support for the Year, the Declaration of Tunis, and a set of specific conclusions and recommendations on policies concerning families and the observance of the Year.

39. The United Nations Europe and North America Preparatory Meeting for the International Year of the Family was held from 26 to 30 April 1993 at Valletta. It was organized by the secretariat for the Year in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), at the invitation of the Government of Malta. It was attended by representatives of 28 States members of ECE and by observers for one other State, and by representatives of United Nations system organizations and specialized agencies as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The Meeting adopted the Valletta Declaration, containing its specific recommendations.

40. The United Nations Asia and the Pacific Preparatory Meeting for the International Year of the Family was held from 24 to 28 May 1993 at Beijing. It was organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in cooperation with the secretariat for the Year, at the invitation of the Government of the People's Republic of China. It was attended by representatives of 25 States members of ESCAP and by observers from one other State, and by representatives of United Nations system organizations and specialized agencies as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The Meeting adopted policy recommendations as well as recommendations on the preparation and the observance of the Year. It also adopted the Beijing Declaration on the Family in Asia and the Pacific.

41. The United Nations Latin America and the Caribbean Preparatory Meeting for the International Year of the Family will be held from 9 to 14 August 1993 at Cartagena. It will be organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in cooperation with the secretariat for the Year, at the invitation of the Government of Colombia.

42. The regional and interregional meetings reaffirmed the central role of families as basic units in societies. They highlighted that families everywhere were affected by the dramatic changes that societies were undergoing, which often led to stress, reduced ability to meet basic needs as well as the

emergence of new forms, structures and organization of families. Policies and programmes needed to take account of these factors. Production, reproduction and socialization were considered as basic societal functions that families continued to carry out in all parts of the world. In particular, the nurturing and caring functions of families were also emphasized. Participants stressed the crucial importance of supporting families in meeting the basic needs of their members and in carrying out their socio-economic and cultural functions. In this regard, they highlighted the relevance of long-term strategies and identified various elements requiring special attention.

43. The meetings viewed the International Year of the Family as an invaluable opportunity for a serious reflection on well-conceived national strategies to benefit families. Its preparation and observance should lead to the integration of a strong family element in national development strategies and plans. This was essential despite and because of the difficult socio-economic conditions in several countries. The meetings recommended various measures that should be taken for the successful observance of the Year. In this regard, they stressed the need to link effectively activities for the Year with relevant other events and emphasized the close interrelatedness of the Year to the implementation of various international conventions and other instruments.

44. The meetings highlighted the significant role of non-governmental organizations in the activities for the Year as well as in addressing family issues and the necessity to provide them with adequate support. They called on Member States, the United Nations system, all concerned intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well as the private sector to support strongly the World NGO Forum on Launching the International Year of the Family, to be held at Valletta, from 28 November to 2 December 1993.

45. The meetings also pointed to the need for adequate follow-up measures to the Year. It was proposed that, in order to provide a framework for follow-up and direction for future work, an international plan of action regarding families be developed, which should focus on activities at local and national level, identify priorities on which consensus could be achieved and suggest specific measures to foster international cooperation and support on family matters. Policy-making organs of specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system were invited to consider follow-up action to the Year.

46. The reports of the four regional and interregional preparatory meetings will be made available to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

47. Regional commissions have continued their active involvement in preparing for the Year and several measures are being undertaken or planned by them. For example, ECE, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Council of Europe, organized the European Population Conference at Geneva in March 1993, which had fertility and family as one of its themes. ESCAP continues to give special attention to family issues and the Year in the context of the implementation of the Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region towards the Year 2000 and Beyond and will undertake several country studies on the role of the family in development. ECLAC continues to be involved in three major areas of activities for the Year: promoting national action in the countries of the region; facilitating up-to-date information; and conducting and supporting policy-oriented studies. As a follow-up to the United Nations Africa

and Western Asia Preparatory Meeting for the International Year of the Family, ECA will convene, in 1993, an expert group meeting on the impact of economic and social changes on the African family; and ESCWA will organize, in November 1993, an expert group meeting on the Year. Both meetings are financed by the Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the Family. The section on social development and policies in the ESCWA Socio-economic Survey 1992 focused on family-related issues.

48. The Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Social Affairs, held from 28 June to 2 July 1993 at Bratislava, Slovakia, discussed as a specific agenda item "Family policies - gender and generation perspectives toward the United Nations International Year of the Family". The Conference reaffirmed the validity of the Valletta Declaration, adopted by the United Nations Europe and North America Preparatory Meeting for the International Year of the Family, and the support for the Bratislava International Centre for Family Studies.

49. As part of the global initiative of the First Lady of Costa Rica in support of the Year, entitled "First Ladies for the Family", the third meeting of the First Ladies of Latin American and Caribbean Countries, to be held at San José in September 1993, will have family as the central subject. The two previous meetings had served to mark the commitment to children, youth, women and the family within the poor segments of the population of the region.

C. International level

1. Major international events of specific relevance to the Year

50. One of the objectives of the Year is to build upon the international activities concerning women, children, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities as well as other major events of concern to the family or its individual members. A number of major global events have taken place or are scheduled to take place during 1992 to 1995, which have a direct relevance to family issues and the objectives of the Year. Measures are taken to incorporate and highlight the interrelated substantive concerns of the Year in those events. To facilitate this process, the ad hoc inter-agency meetings on the Year included specific agenda items on them and held discussions on the basis of substantive papers prepared by the respective secretariat units responsible for their preparations.

51. Relevant events that took place in 1992 and 1993 included the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the tenth anniversary of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing, the conclusion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and the World Conference on Human Rights. The forthcoming events include the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in 1994; the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in 1995; the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, to be held in 1995; and the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, also to be held in 1995.

52. Substantive contributions highlighting the human rights dimensions of family issues were made to the World Conference on Human Rights. The Conference stressed the need to ensure the protection of individual's rights in the

context of family relationships and to address discrimination, the denial of equal rights of family members, particularly women, domestic violence and abuse or neglect of children. It also pointed out the positive role that families could play in promoting respect, learning and practice of basic human rights and thereby their actual enjoyment. The joint inter-agency statement on the Year, issued by the concerned organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system (see annex), was available to the Conference.

53. At its session in 1993, the preparatory body for the Year requested the Commission on Human Rights, the Population Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women to include in the agendas for their sessions in 1993 or 1994 consideration of the principles and objectives of the Year in the context of their major areas of concern, and to propose specific follow-up measures regarding human rights, population issues and the advancement of women as each affects or is affected by families, including family-oriented components of the World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace.

2. Intergovernmental organizations

54. Intergovernmental organizations continue to make a major contribution to the preparations for the Year through the dissemination of information, organization of meetings and seminars, research, assistance and guidance in policy development as well as integration of a more pronounced family focus into exiting activities. Several of them have identified focal points for the Year and taken special measures to develop or devote activities specifically to its observance, while strong expressions of support have also been received from others in which families do not figure prominently as a focus of activities. They include: African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Caribbean Community, Colombo Plan for Cooperative and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific, Commonwealth Secretariat, Council of Europe, Economic Community of West African States, Commission of the European Communities, European Economic Community, League of Arab States, Fund for International Development of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Organization of African Unity, Organization of American States, Southern African Development Coordination Conference and South Pacific Commission. Intergovernmental organizations have also involved their networks of organizations, affiliates and national contacts in the preparatory process.

55. Some illustrative activities include the twenty-third session of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Family Affairs, to be convened on the theme "Family policies, children's rights and parental responsibilities", preparation of a draft recommendation on "Coherent and integrated family policies" as well as a special research project by the Council of Europe; a panel session entitled "Towards 1994 - the International Year of the Family" at the thirty-ninth Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference; seminars on "The role of the father in the family of tomorrow" and on "New ways of working: what challenges for companies and families" by the Commission of the European Communities; support for planning national action for the Year by the Inter-American Children's Institute of the Organization of American States; and

the adoption of a special resolution in support of the Year by the fifty-eighth session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity.

3. Non-governmental organizations

56. The non-governmental sector has continued and reinforced its significant partnership role in the preparations for the Year, serving as an effective advocate and vital force in generating and implementing concrete measures. The number of national, regional and international non-governmental organizations engaged in preparing for the Year and the specific measures undertaken by them have been steadily growing.

57. In addition to the numerous organizations that demonstrate general interest and involvement, international and regional non-governmental organizations that have informed the secretariat for the Year of their active participation include the following: African Association of Education for Development, African Association for Literacy and Adult Education, All India Women's Conference, Associated Country Women of the World, Baha'í International Community, Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, Caritas Internationalis (International Confederation of Catholic Charities), Catholic International Education Office, Christian Children's Fund Inc., Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Community, Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council, Crossways International, Defense for Children International Movement, Disabled Peoples' International, Eurolink Age, European Federation for the Welfare of the Elderly, European Union of Women, Executive Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations associated with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat, Family Life Education Subcommittee of the Non-Governmental Organizations Development Committee in Geneva, Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers), Foundation for the Rights of the Family - International Secretariat (PRODEFA), General Arab Women Federation, General Conference of the Seventh-Day Adventists, Group on the Family of the Non-Governmental Organizations Standing Committee (UNESCO), Helpage International, IPS - Inter Press Service International Cooperative, International Abolitionist Federation, International Academy of Family Psychology, International Alliance of Women - Equal Rights, Equal Responsibilities, International Association of Charities, International Association of Juvenile and Family Court Magistrates, International Association of Lions Clubs - Lions Club International, International Association of Schools of Social Work, International Catholic Child Bureau, International Committee of Catholic Nurses, International Confederation of Christian Family Movement, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, International Confederation of Midwives, International Cooperative Alliance, International Council of Jewish Women, International Council of Nurses, International Council of Psychologists, International Council of Women, International Council on Alcohol and Addictions, International Council on Social Welfare, International Council on the Management of Population Programmes, International Federation for Family Life Promotion, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation for Parent Education, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of Disabled Workers and Civilian Handicapped, International Federation of Pedestrians, International Federation of Rural Adult Catholic Movements, International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, International Federation of Social Workers, International Federation of

University Women, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, International Federation on Aging, International Friendship League, International Humanist and Ethical Union, International Inner Wheel, International Kolping Society, International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicap, International Movement ATD Fourth World, International Organization of Consumers Unions, International Planned Parenthood Federation, International Round Table for the Advancement of Counselling, International Social Science Council, International Social Security Association, International Social Service, International Society on Family Law, International Sociological Association, International Study Center for Children and Families, International Union of Family Organisations, Inter-Parliamentary Union, La Leche League International Inc., Law Association for Asia and the Western Pacific, League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Medical Women's International Association, Mother and Child International (International Association for Maternal and Neonatal Health), Movement for a Better World, Muslim World League, National Council of German Women's Organizations - Federal Union of Women's Organizations and Women's Groups of German Associations, E.V., New Humanity Focolare Movement, Non-Governmental Organizations Committee on the Family in New York, Non-Governmental Organizations Committee on the Family in Vienna, Non-Governmental Organizations Committee on UNICEF, Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association, Pax Christi - International Catholic Peace Movement, Pax Romana, Rehabilitation International, Rotary International, Salvation Army, Save the Children Fund, Service and Research Foundation of Asia on Family and Culture, Socialist International, Socialist International Women, Soroptimist International, SOS - Kinderdorf International, Special NGO Committee on Development, Steering Group of Catholic Family Organizations in Europe, United Nations/Non-Governmental Organizations Group on Women and Development, Union of Arab Jurists, United Schools International, Women for Racial and Economic Equality, Women's International Democratic Federation, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, World Assembly of Youth, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, World Christian Life Community, World Federation for Mental Health, World Federation of Methodist Women, World Federation of Trade Unions, World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations, World Federation of UNESCO Centres, Clubs and Associations, World Federation of United Nations Associations, World Leisure and Recreation Association, World Movement of Mothers, World Organization for Early Childhood Education, World Peace Council, World Union for Progressive Judaism, World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, World Vision International, World Young Women's Christian Association and Zonta International.

58. As a result of the pioneering work carried out by the non-governmental organizations, in close cooperation with the secretariat for the Year, there has lately been a great increase of interest in and action for the Year, both at the international and, especially, at the local and national levels. At the international level, numerous organizations have incorporated in their programme activities specific measures to prepare and observe the Year. The major areas of activities continue to be spreading the message of the Year to the local and community levels, promoting awareness about the principles and objectives of the Year, meetings or seminars on family issues to identify priorities and strategies to deal with them, information and experience exchange, research and studies on family issues, training and family-specific projects. Such

activities are undertaken also at the regional level, by the regional affiliates of international organizations or the regional organizations.

59. Illustrative descriptions of the numerous activities of the voluntary sector are contained in the report of the Secretary-General. 2/ Since the preparation of that report, such activities have been continued and important new initiatives undertaken, including several international gatherings on family issues and the Year. For example, the International Union of Family Organisations held a world conference on the economic rights of families, as part of its series of meetings on the rights of families; the International Women's Rights Action Watch organized a conference on women, family law and human rights; the Steering Group of Catholic Family Organizations in Europe and the German Catholic Family Association held an international symposium on perspectives of family politics; the Hungarian Group of the International Parliamentary Union conducted a workshop on surviving transition: social welfare safety nets for children and vulnerable families; the Catholic Child Bureau held a regional consultation on environment, development and child survival; Acción Familiar de Sevilla in Spain organized an international meeting of family organizations; and the Family Law and Family Rights Section of the Law Association for Asia and the Pacific and the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia held the first world congress on family law and children's rights.

60. The meeting of Women Parliamentarians of the 89th Inter-Parliamentary Conference included a specific agenda item on the International Year of the Family. The meeting initiated a resolution, entitled "Support for the United Nations International Year of the Family", which was subsequently adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Council at its 152nd session, in April 1993 (see A/48/222, annex VIII). The resolution invited members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to associate themselves in a meaningful manner with the Year and called on them to encourage the identification of appropriate administrative responsibilities and resources to ensure the active preparation for, and observance of, the Year.

61. On 5 and 6 June 1993, a "Familyfest '93" was held in Rome by the New Families Movement of the New Humanity Focolare Movement, in cooperation with the secretariat for the Year. Held as a preparatory activity for the Year, the event brought together some 6,000 couples from all over the world and launched a message for families of different cultural, social and religious traditions, marking the observance of the International Year of the Family. The major programme of the event, which included live satellite connections with simultaneous family gatherings in various cities around the world, was telecast in different parts of the world to millions of viewers.

62. Voluntary organizations play a significant role in the work of national coordinating mechanisms in several countries. In some other countries, such as Canada, Cameroon and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, voluntary organizations have set up coordinating committees on the Year.

63. In addition, a growing number of national, local and community organizations, including the national associations or committees for the United Nations, UNICEF and UNESCO, are initiating activities for the Year, as indicated by the correspondence addressed by them to the secretariat for the Year. Examples include: Feración Argentina Apoyo Familiar; Austrian Family

Association, the Austrian National Committee of UNICEF and the Institute for Marriage and Family in Austria; Australian Family Association, Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission and Australian Parents Council; La Ligue des Familles in Belgium; National Confederation of Natural Family Planning Centres in Brazil; Youth and Family Counselling of Peel Inc. and Association for Early Childhood Education in Canada; Danish Family Planning Association; Mannerheim League for Child Welfare in Finland; Confédération Syndicale des Familles and Fédération des Familles de France, in France; UNICEF Germany, the German Country Women's Association and the German Catholic Family Association; Association Guinéenne pour le Bien-Etre Familial; the Council of Social Service in Hong Kong; Hungarian Association of Large Families; Indian Council of Child Welfare, Indian Medical Association and Family Planning Association of India; Centro Italiano di Solidarietá and Centro Pastorale per la Famiglia in Italy; Japan Association for Women's Education and Japan Family Life Problem Study Association; Family Life Counselling Association of Kenya and Kenya Alliance for Advocacy on Children Rights; Malagasy Organization for Parents Education; Senior Citizen's Welfare Association of Nepal; Marriage Guidance New Zealand; Family Planning Association of Pakistan; Papua New Guinea Union Mission of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church; the National Council of Women of the Philippines; Unión de Asociaciones Familiares and Pay y Cooperación in Spain; Central Council of Disabled Persons in Sri Lanka; Pro Familia Schweiz in Switzerland; Family Life Association of Swaziland; South African Association of Marital and Family Therapy and South African National Council for Mental Health; Marriage Encounter in Uganda; Family Centre Network, National Children's Bureau and National Family Trust in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and Instituto de Ciencias Familiares in Uruguay. In the United States of America, the National Council on Family Relations is carrying out several activities, including a major publication entitled "One World, Many Families"; the American Home Economics Association has set up a task force on the Year; and the National Association of Social Workers has initiated a project on strengthening families through international innovations transfer. In several countries, the commissions for the laity and family life of the Catholic Church have initiated various activities to prepare and observe the Year.

64. Non-governmental organizations also continued their multilateral cooperation and joint activities for the Year, described in the report of the Secretary-General, 2/ facilitated by the family committees of non-governmental organizations in Vienna, New York and Paris as well as other concerned committees, including the Family Life Education Subcommittee of the Non-governmental Organizations Development Committee at Geneva, the Non-Governmental Organizations Committee on UNICEF, the Special Non-Governmental Organizations Committee on Development, the Executive Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations associated with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat and the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council. In August 1993, several non-governmental organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean jointly adopted a Cartagena Declaration on the Year, in which they pledged to participate forcefully and actively in the regional work relating to families and outlined specific activities in that regard. They also decided to establish a non-governmental organizations coordinating committee for Latin America and the Caribbean.

65. The Non-Governmental Organizations Committees on the Family in Vienna, New York and Paris have reinforced their promotional campaign for the Year and substantive work on family issues. The Committee at Vienna continues to prepare and widely distribute various promotional and substantive material.

66. The Committee at Vienna has also greatly advanced preparations for holding the World NGO Forum on Launching the International Year of the Family, which it will be organizing in Valletta, from 28 November to 2 December 1993, in collaboration with the Committees in New York and Paris and in cooperation with the Government of Malta and the secretariat for the Year. The Forum will bring together persons engaged in the Year from all levels to exchange and generate ideas and activities that are specifically relevant to the situations of families in national, local and grass-roots levels, thus serving as a platform for catalysing effective activities for the Year and its follow-up.

4. Research and academic institutions

67. The preparatory process to the Year has intensified the involvement of research and academic institutions in family-specific issues and many initiatives in the field have been launched as specific contributions towards meeting the objectives of the Year. Several of these initiatives were described in the report of the Secretary-General. 2/

68. Academic and research institutions continue to make specific plans to prepare for and observe the Year, including expert meetings, symposia, research and publications programmes. A number of professional or scholarly associations have also included themes on the Year in their regular programme of meetings for 1993 and 1994. For example, the Committee on Family Research of the International Sociological Association convened a seminar on "Social change and family" and plans to hold another seminar on "Gender and families - choices, challenges and changing policies". Substantive issues related to family studies will be discussed during the Thirteenth World Congress on Sociology in 1994. The Centro Studi e Ricerche Sulla Famiglia and Istituto per lo Studio Della Multiethnicita in Milan, Italy, will convene a meeting on "The family in a multi-ethnic society". The Royal Australia and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists is planning its 1994 conference on the theme "The contribution of the family to the resiliency of the child". The Association for Psychotherapy and Family Therapy will host, in collaboration with the Department of Psychology of the Charles University at Prague, the fourth Family Therapy Symposium on "The family in the context of changes". The Centro Internazionale Studi Famiglia in Milan, Italy, held a preliminary seminar in preparation for its planned Congress in 1994 on "Family associations in Europe: building family associationism between everyday life and a new citizenship". The Tata Institute for Social Sciences at Bombay, India, has published a special edition of the Indian Journal of Social Work on the subject of "Family development" and plans to organize several seminars in 1993 and 1994 on various issues related to the Year, including "Family-Centred social work education". International seminars will be held in 1994 by the Service and Research Foundation of Asia on Family and Culture at Madras, India, on "Women, family and the new society"; and by the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Centre at Haifa, Israel, on "Women, family and society".

69. Family-related research also figures prominently in the efforts of intergovernmental organizations and regional institutes. Illustrative activities include the publication of a two-volume study of national family policies in the countries of the European Communities by the European Observatory of National Family Policies at Brussels; seminars on abandoned children and women in development organized by the African Centre for Applied Research and Training in Social Development at Tripoli; publication of a special bibliography on family by the Inter-American Children's Institute at Montevideo; and training or expert gatherings by the Centre for African Family Studies at Nairobi.

70. At the national level, research is a common feature of plans of action for the Year. Examples include research on: urban migration in Chile; family issues among racial and cultural groups in Bolivia and Senegal; database development in Greece; the situation of families vis-à-vis policy in Panama and Poland; managing family life and career responsibilities in Denmark; causes of early school leaving in Jordan; impacts of economic programmes and adjustment processes in Chile and Ukraine; the situation of children in Finland; psycho-social aspects of early human development in Malaysia; and home education in Japan and Malaysia; family problems in Maldives. Research programmes are also prominent in the national plans of action in other countries, such as Barbados, Belarus, Canada, Cyprus, France, Hungary, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey.

5. United Nations system and inter-agency cooperation

71. Within the United Nations Secretariat, the following offices are involved in the preparations for the Year: Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (various units, including the secretariat for the International Year of the Family, Division for the Advancement of Women and Social Integration and Welfare Branch), Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (Population Division and Statistical Office), Department of Administration and Management (Office of Conference Services), Department of Public Information, ECE, ESCAP, ECLAC, ECA, ESCWA, United Nations Office at Vienna (Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch), United Nations Centre for Human Rights, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and United Nations Environment Programme. The United Nations bodies concerned include: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF, United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNFPA, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations International Drug Control Programme, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and United Nations University. Research institutes include: United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. Two joint bodies are involved: the World Food Council and the World Food Programme. The specialized agencies include: International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNESCO, WHO, World Bank, Universal Postal Union, World Meteorological Organization and International Fund for Agricultural Development.

72. The plans and activities of these offices, bodies and agencies for the preparation and observance of the Year are described in the report of the

Secretary-General. 2/ Since its preparation, several measures reported therein as planned have been implemented and many new initiatives undertaken. An inventory of action for the Year by the United Nations organizations and agencies is being prepared.

73. Ad hoc inter-agency meetings of the organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system on the International Year of the Family have been organized to develop a system-wide coordinated approach and actions. The outcome of the first and second meetings and the several joint projects undertaken are also described in the report of the Secretary-General. 2/

74. The third ad hoc inter-agency meeting on the Year was held from 10 to 12 March 1993 and was attended by representatives of 17 bodies and agencies. The meeting reviewed progress made at the mid-point of the preparatory phase of the Year and identified further measures to be taken. The meeting finalized an inter-agency statement on the International Year of the Family, which was subsequently approved by the Administrative Committee on Coordination and issued as a joint statement by the concerned organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system. The text of the statement is contained in the annex to the present report. The meeting also agreed on the joint implementation of eight projects, of substantive and promotional nature. These are: a project on families at risk, under the shared leadership of WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO and FAO; three projects under the lead role of the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat - an information kit on the Year, a film on the impact of the ageing of population on the family and a video on female-headed and single-parent families; two projects under the lead role of UNESCO - a publication on "Families: courage and hope in a world of change" and a photo exhibit on families; an inventory of action for the Year by the United Nations system, under the lead role of the secretariat for the Year; and a manual on the provisions relating to the family contained in the United Nations Conventions and other instruments, under the shared leadership of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and the secretariat for the Year.

75. Pursuant to the recommendation of the third ad hoc inter-agency meeting, an inter-agency task force on families at risk met at Geneva on 12 and 13 July 1993, at the invitation of WHO. The task force elaborated the conceptual framework and measures of implementation for an inter-agency project on families that are at risk of breakdown or vulnerability. The project will attempt to pool together system-wide expertise in order to identify indicators of and circumstances placing families at risk as well as factors that enable families to cope with problems and stress; identify tools for developing programmes and activities directed at families at risk; and promote the application of interventions that would enhance family well-being.

76. Further to its consideration of promotional and information activities for the Year at its eighteenth session, the Joint United Nations Information Committee again considered the matter at its nineteenth session, on the basis of a report by the Department of Public Information containing suggestions for joint activities.

6. Coordinator and secretariat for the International Year of the Family

77. As described in the report of the Secretary-General, 2/ the Coordinator for the Year, supported by the small secretariat, has been serving as a catalyst, facilitator and coordinator of action. With the beginning of the observance phase of the Year only a few months away, efforts have been intensified to mobilize all potential partners and resources. In approving the Secretary-General's proposals regarding the restructuring of the United Nations Secretariat in the economic and social sector, the General Assembly concurred that the secretariat for the Year, which is part of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, will temporarily remain at Vienna so that organizational continuity can be ensured in implementing the pressing tasks of the Year's preparation, observance and immediate follow-up.

78. The secretariat initiated the four regional preparatory meetings for the Year and organized two of them as a specific means of supporting the efforts of Governments and action at the national level. In addition to the publication of a Guide for a National Action Programme for the Year and the Inventory of National Action, the series of in-depth discussions on the various aspects of national and international level involvement with senior officials of numerous Governments have been continued. Collaboration with and support to the national coordinating mechanisms, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the mass media and the private sector have been reinforced. Substantive support has been provided to various meetings and events, including participation in them. The secretariat has worked closely with the various concerned organizations and agencies of the United Nations system. It organized the ad hoc inter-agency meetings on the Year and has taken a lead role in their follow-up. Promotion of family-specific research and study has been another area of action.

79. Efforts have also been continued and reinforced in the priority area of promoting the substantive orientation of the Year, in particular regarding the promotion of human rights within the family, advancement of women, protection and development of children, as well as other development issues of major relevance to families. Measures have been pursued to promote research on family issues and financial assistance from the Voluntary Fund for the Year made available for research activities. Pursuant to the recommendation of the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders to include the issue of domestic violence in the preparations and observance of the Year and to develop appropriate preventive measures, a Resource Manual on Strategies for Confronting Domestic Violence (ST/CSDHA/20) was published by the former Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs at Vienna.

80. An Interregional Meeting on the Role of the Family in the Socialization of Youth was organized by the secretariat and the Youth Policies and Programmes Unit in the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, in cooperation with the All-China Youth Federation. The Meeting, held at Beijing from 31 May to 4 June 1993, identified recommendations and guidelines to enhance the interactive roles of youth and the family in society. The results of the Meeting will serve as a major source for a forthcoming issue of the "IYF Occasional Papers".

81. Six issues of "IYF Occasional Papers Series" have been published, on "Family matters", "Family: forms and functions"; "Family and crime"; "Older persons in the family: facets of empowerment"; "Family as an Environment: an ecosystem perspective on family life" and "Partnership Families: building the smallest democracy at the heart of society". Several more issues are being prepared. "The Family: Bulletin on the International Year of the Family" also continues to be published quarterly in English, French and Spanish, which serves as the main source of information on the preparations and observance of the Year. The wide distribution of all promotional and public information material has been actively pursued. More individuals, government bodies and institutions, national coordinating committees for the Year and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations have been awarded testimonials, designating them as patrons of the Year.

82. The secretariat continued the substantive management of the Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the Family by reviewing requests for funding, preparing funding recommendations and carrying out other relevant tasks for the allocation of resources. An active fund-raising campaign has also been pursued, covering both the public and private sectors.

83. As part of a concerted promotional and information campaign for the Year, the secretariat has initiated or promoted the development of several special projects in preparation and observance of the Year. This has included the development of a theme song for the Year and plans for its launching by well-known entertainment figures; an information campaign addressed to television and radio networks throughout the world to encourage topical and special broadcasting events in 1994; the Families of the World Project, a major international research and multi-media undertaking based in the Netherlands; the production and distribution of numerous gift and commemorative items displaying the logo of the Year, including a selection of time-pieces produced by a French workshop staffed by persons with disabilities and cloth emblems with a Finnish group supporting special family projects in Finland and Estonia. Souvenir items marking the Year have been developed with the United Nations Sales Section and UNICEF Greetings Card Operations. Contacts have been taken up with major producers and broadcast networks regarding film projects to complement publications or other activities. Support has also been provided for newspaper and magazine feature articles on the Year and plans are developed in many areas of the world for regular reports to be provided through these media during 1994. One of them is a series of national seminars in India to sensitize representatives of the mass media to the International Year of the Family.

84. Other initiatives for which the secretariat has played a supportive or facilitative role include a major art exhibition entitled "(Familie): Ideal und Realität", organized by the Niederösterreichischer Landesausstellung and displayed at the Barockschloss Riegersburg in Austria; a publication in association with Catticus Corporation on the theme of the "Material World" based on photographs and information from 40 countries focusing on the family and its possessions in relation to their home and environment; a cookbook based on family anecdotes and recipes from celebrity contributors in cooperation with the World Leisure and Recreation Association; an international benefit concert with the Leipzinger Gewandhaus Orchester conducted by Kurt Masur, planned for October 1994 in association with PRO VITA SANA, Luxembourg; a series of books being explored for young readers on the subject of families and customs in

collaboration with Dragons World Publishing and the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat as well as other materials and books designed for pre-literate children and a study trip of 36 Swiss students, ages 12 to 15, to French-speaking countries of Africa to produce educational materials for use in schools on the theme of families and migration.

D. Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the Family

85. The Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the Family was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/133. In that resolution, the Assembly invited all States and interested organizations to make voluntary contributions to the Fund. The resources of the Fund are being used to carry out preparatory activities for the Year; to support national action and projects, especially in developing countries, that directly promote the objectives of the Year; to carry out technical assistance programmes; to support national capacity-building for long-term family-oriented policies; and to support research, data collection, information exchange and experience-sharing between countries on family issues.

1. Resources of the Fund

86. As at 20 July 1993, a total cash contribution of US$ 1,444,540 has been received to the Fund, of which $234,060 is from Governments, $1,182,533 from organizations and individuals and $27,947 from other sources. A group of business and professional leaders from Hong Kong contributed over $1 million dollars to the Fund. An additional $274,988 has been pledged by Governments. This brings the deposited and pledged contributions from Governments to a total of $509,048, a bulk of which is for earmarked projects. The total resources of the Fund, deposited and pledged, amount to $1,719,528.

87. Table 1 provides an overview of the resources of the Fund and a breakdown of contributions deposited and pledged by Governments, contributions deposited by individuals and organizations as well as income from other sources, such as administrative overhead earnings and sale of souvenirs. Table 2 lists the contributions deposited and pledged by Governments.

Table 1. Resources of the Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the Family, as at 20 July 1993

(United States dollars)

Source	Deposited	Pledged	Total
Governments	234 060	274 988	509 048
Organizations and individuals	1 182 533	-	1 182 533
Other sources	27 947	-	27 947
Total	1 444 540	274 988	1 719 528

Table 2. Contributions by Governments to the Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the Family, as at 20 July 1993

(United States dollars)

Country	Deposited	Pledged	Total
Austria	30 435	-	30 435
Belgium	-	20 000	20 000
Benin	-	1 000	1 000
China	-	20 000	20 000
Cyprus	2 000	-	2 000
France	-	38 460	38 460
Germany	151 528	151 528	303 056
Greece	10 505	-	10 505
Holy See	2 073	-	2 073
Jordan	2 000	-	2 000
Morocco	-	5 000	5 000
Namibia	1 000	-	1 000
Panama	5 000	10 000	15 000
Philippines	500	1 000	1 500
Poland	4 500	-	4 500
Portugal	8 123	-	8 123
Republic of Korea	-	2 000	2 000
Saint Lucia	-	1 000	1 000
Spain (Province of Balear)	500	-	500
Switzerland	4 227	-	4 227
Tunisia	2 000	-	2 000
Turkey	9 669	25 000	34 669
Total	234 060	274 988	509 048

2. Allocation of resources

88. As at 20 July 1993, resource allocations totalling $1,061,600 have been made from the Fund to carry out preparatory activities and to support projects.

89. Major elements of the expenditures undertaken so far have comprised the four regional preparatory meetings for the Year, including participation costs for least developed countries; expert group meetings, including those to be organized by regional commissions; support to projects of the United Nations system, such as a statistical chart and a world atlas on the family, video production on single-parent families and on family and ageing as well as a photo contest and exhibit; and grants to projects of non-governmental organizations and others. Table 3 lists the allocation of resources from the Fund into eight major categories.

Table 3. Allocation of resources from the Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the Family, as at 20 July 1993

(United States dollars)

Regional and interregional preparatory meetings, including participation by least developed countries	314 986
Expert group meetings, including those to be organized by regional commissions	55 000
Support to projects of bodies and organizations in the United Nations system	110 200
Grants and support to projects of non-governmental organizations and others	270 400
Substantive studies and publications	110 000
Public information and promotion	88 014
Database on the family	61 000
Technical, advisory and substantive services	52 000
Total	1 061 600

3. Resource balance and requirements

90. Table 4 provides an overview of total resources deposited, allocation of resources made and the estimated balance of resources of the Fund.

Table 4. Total resources deposited, allocation of resources and estimated balance of resources of the Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the Family, as at 20 July 1993

(United States dollars)

Resources received	1 444 540	
Estimated total resources available for allocation, after provision for overhead costs		1 278 354
Resource allocations made		1 061 600
Estimated balance of resources		216 754

91. As may be noted from table 4, the bulk of the deposited resources of the Fund has already been committed to carry out basic preparatory measures and in support of selected projects. Notwithstanding the pledged contributions from Governments for an additional $274,988, which includes an earmarked contribution of $150,000, unless additional resources are mobilized and more generous contributions made, the Fund will not be able to provide even seed money grants to the highly deserving projects, in fulfilment of its mandates. Numerous deserving projects from the national and local levels have been submitted to the secretariat for the Year for funding and several more are likely to follow as Governments and organizations finalize their plans for the observance as well as follow-up of the Year.

4. In-kind contributions

92. In addition to cash contributions to the Voluntary Fund, several Governments, firms in the private sector and individuals have made in-kind contributions to the secretariat for the Year. These contributions are recapitulated in tables 5 and 6 below. Table 5 lists the in-kind contributions made by Governments. Table 6 lists the in-kind contributions made by the private sector and individuals.

Table 5. In-kind contributions to the Secretariat for the International Year of the Family by Governments, as at 20 July 1993

Country	Type of contribution
Austria a/	Associate expert, initially for one year
Canada	Non-reimbursable loan of staff for three years and five months
China	Hosting the United Nations Asia and Pacific Preparatory Meeting for the Year
Colombia	Hosting the United Nations Latin America and Caribbean Preparatory Meeting for the Year
Finland	Non-reimbursable loan of staff for six months
	Printing of booklet on the Year in English, 60,000 copies
France	Printing of booklet on the Year in French, 11,000 copies
Italy	Associate expert, initially for one year
Malta	Hosting the United Nations Europe and North America
	Preparatory Meeting for the Year
Spain	Printing of booklet on the Year in Spanish, 15,000 copies
Tunisia	Hosting the United Nations Africa and Western Asia Preparatory Meeting for the Year

a/ The Government of Austria has also supported the work of the Non-Governmental Organizations Committee on the Family at Vienna through financial assistance amounting to S 900,000 (approximately US$ 75,000) during 1992 and 1993.

Table 6. In-kind contributions to the secretariat for the International Year of the Family by the private sector and individuals, as at 20 July 1993

Firm or individual	Type of contribution
Austrian Worker's Compensation Board	Printing of booklet on the Year in English, 7,500 copies
Floraprint Austria	50,000 IYF miniature poster bags
Hans Helf KG	IYF stickers, 50,000 copies
Littasy-Rollier, Cathérine	Designed and donated logo-type of the International Year of the Family
Olivetti Austria GmbH	Data-processing equipment (6 workstations plus server, 1 laser printer, 1 docking station and 1 monitor)
Philips Dictation Systems	Voice Manager dictation system
Piatnik-Playing Cards	8,000 IYF Seasons' Greetings cards.
Reinach, Jacqueline	Wrote, composed and donated the theme song for the International Year of the Family
Wiener Graphische Kunstanstalt, Kunstanstalt, Otto Sares GmbH	Paper for and printing of a large quantity of stationery for the Year
Wiener Papier Grosshandlung GmbH	A large quantity of Pacific paper for producing a special folder for the Year
Wang Austria	Loan of word-processing workstation for three years

V. OBSERVANCE OF THE YEAR

93. Pursuant to the General Assembly decision in paragraph 2 of its resolution 44/82, the focus of activities for the observance of the Year is at the local and national levels. In keeping with the strategy regarding the programme of the Year, appropriate specific measures must be determined at these levels. Governments have been requested to develop and implement national activities in observance of the Year, with the involvement and collaboration of the voluntary and private sectors. In order to facilitate and support the national level observance of the Year, its secretariat has taken various steps, including the organization of regional preparatory meetings, publication of a Guide for a National Action Programme on the Year as well as making available numerous other substantive and promotional material.

94. As indicated by the information available to the secretariat, a large spectrum of measures are planned in various countries for the observance of the Year. A wide variety of promotional and information activities form an integral part of these measures. Attention is being given to make effective and extensive use of the channels of communication and to achieve the active participation of all segments of population in the observances of the Year. A priority consideration is to ensure that the observance of the Year leads to a long-term process of integrating a strong family component in national development strategies and plans, so that the substantive objectives of the Year can be met, particularly in light of the statement by the preparatory body that families are the fullest reflection of the strengths and weaknesses of the social and developmental welfare environment and, as such, offer a unique comprehensive and synthesizing approach to social issues.

95. While the focus of action for the Year remains to be at local and national levels, in order to lend support to those efforts and to bridge globally the Year's observances, several measures are being developed at the regional and international levels. The secretariat for the Year continues to receive information and requests for support on new initiatives from around the world. It has compiled and widely distributed a calendar of events related to the Year, containing detailed information on world-wide action. While a complete listing of all global events planned in observance of the Year by its various partners is beyond the scope of this report, they include the following:

(a) A special concert and children's art exhibition to launch the Year, during the General Conference of UNESCO, Paris, October-November 1993;

(b) The World NGO Forum on Launching the International Year of the Family, to be held at Valletta from 28 November to 2 December 1993;

(c) Launching of the International Year of the Family, in early December 1993, at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly;

(d) Launching of a series of United Nations stamps on families;

(e) Launching of the theme song for the Year;

(f) Observance of the first International Day of Families, on 15 May 1994;

(g) The production of films, videos and publications on various aspects of family life and family issues and their public launching during 1994;

(h) Several family-oriented projects directly benefiting families in need;

(i) Numerous international meetings devoted to substantive family issues;

(j) Two plenary meetings of the General Assembly, at its forty-ninth session in 1994, designated as the international conference on families and devoted to the implementation of the follow-up to the Year.

VI. EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

96. The principles adopted by the General Assembly for the International Year of the Family include that the "Year should constitute an event within a continuing process: measures will be needed to ensure appropriate evaluation of progress made and obstacles encountered both prior to and during the Year, in order to ensure its success and adequate follow-up". The comprehensive outline of a programme for the Year, contained in document A/44/407 and endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 44/82, called for adequate evaluation and follow-up activities and suggested that evaluation should form part of follow-up measures.

97. In their recommendations to the General Assembly, the preparatory and coordinating bodies of the Year proposed that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure effective observance of and follow-up to the Year, commensurate with its important principles and objectives; to report on its observance at the national, regional and international levels; and to submit specific proposals on the follow-up to the Year, including a draft plan of action, if deemed appropriate, to its fiftieth session.

98. The regional and interregional preparatory meetings for the International Year of the Family invited policy-making organs of the United Nations system to consider follow-up action to the Year and proposed to develop, in order to provide a framework for follow-up and direction for future work, an international plan of action regarding families.

99. It is the intention of the Secretary-General to conduct, in early 1995, an assessment of the impact of the International Year of the Family. It is planned to seek, at the conclusion of the observance phase of the Year, information and views from Member States and others concerned on the appraisal of the Year's observance, its follow-up and the need for and content of a follow-up plan of action on families. It is also planned to hold an interregional expert group meeting, in early 1995, in order to identify and elaborate appropriate follow-up strategies.

100. In elaborating proposals, the Secretary-General will be guided by the decisions, recommendations and views of the General Assembly, the preparatory and coordinating bodies of the Year and the four regional and interregional preparatory meetings. Important elements in this regard will be:

(a) The impact of the International Year of the Family as a special event benefiting families all over the world in their quest for a better life for all

their members, based on the principle of subsidiarity, which seeks solutions to problems at the lowest level of societal structures;

(b) The responses of the policy-making organs of specialized agencies and other bodies in the United Nations system to the request to consider, in the context of their substantive mandates, the principles and objectives of the Year and follow-up action to the Year;

(c) The family-oriented components of the World Conference on Human Rights, held in 1993; the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in 1994; the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in 1995; the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, to be held in 1995; and the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, to be held in 1995;

(d) The contribution of the international conference on families, scheduled to take place at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly in 1994 at an appropriate global policy-making level and devoted to the implementation of the follow-up to the Year;

(e) The views of the Member States of the Commission for Social Development on the desirability to work out a declaration on the role, responsibilities and rights of families;

(f) The observance of 15 May every year as the International Day of Families.

101. Pursuant to the principle of the International Year of the Family that its activities should focus at the national and local levels, its follow-up as well as any plan of action on families deemed necessary should focus on action at the national and local levels, with appropriate measures for effective support from regional and international levels. In accordance with the recommendation of the preparatory and coordinating bodies for the Year, specific proposals in this regard will be submitted to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

Notes

1/ E/CN.5/1991/2.

2/ E/CN.5/1993/3.

3/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 4 (E/1993/24), chap. I, sect. A.

4/ Ibid., 1992, Supplement No. 4 (E/1992/24), chap. I, sect. C.

5/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/47/38), para. 23.

6/ Ibid., para. 7 (f).

7/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

8/ E/CONF.80/10, chap. III.

9/ A/45/625, annex.

10/ World Health Assembly resolution WHA 34.36 of 22 May 1981.

ANNEX

Inter-agency statement on the International Year of the Family, 1994, jointly issued by the concerned organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system

1. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 1994 as the International Year of the Family (IYF), with the aim of creating among Governments, policy-makers and the public a greater awareness of the family as the fundamental unit of society and of promoting activities in support of families. The Assembly called on all concerned organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system to exert every effort in the preparations for the Year, in its observance and in the achievement of its objectives.

2. This joint statement, issued by the concerned organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, is an expression of intent about our respective organizations' commitment to the objectives of the Year.

3. As basic units of society, families and their well-being are germane to all our organizations. Our programmes affect them, in one way or another, even if this is not always, or immediately, apparent.

4. Families are entitled to protection by society and State in order to be able to fully assume their responsibilities as fundamental group units of society. The need for such protection has been recognized in relevant international instruments which make it a duty for States parties to adopt legislative, administrative and other measures to ensure adequate protection to the family and its unity, either directly or through support to the activities of the relevant social institutions.

5. In spite of the many changes in society that have altered their forms and functions, families can provide a vital nurturing framework for the emotional and material support essential to the growth and well-being of their members. Families play an important role in formal and informal education and are active agents for transmitting human values and cultural identity as well as preserving inter-generational links. In this, families are vital to sustainable development. The process of development, however, tends to change the nature of the family. While many of these changes are generally accepted as positive, these and other changes have often constrained the ability of many families to meet their basic human rights and needs. These constraints have increased in many countries, as programmes of retrenchment, adjustment and economic transition take place.

6. The pace and prevalence of change have also differed in different countries, just as families differ in their types, strengths and weaknesses. There is, therefore, no simple view and no easy definition of the family or of family policy. Yet, despite the major changes most societies have undergone in recent decades, policies and programmes still tend to be based on concepts and family models that may no longer reflect reality, notably with respect to gender equality as well as the rights of most of their vulnerable members, especially children.

7. In the positive sense, families are primary agents of socialization and are capable of enabling constructive change and development. They can constitute an essential mechanism for promoting respect for human rights of all individuals. But negative aspects, including social problems, exploitation and abuse, are also often evident within family relationships, hindering individual initiative and personal development. There is a constant need, therefore, to foster the development of perceptions and perspectives regarding families and intra-familial relationships that are consistent with basic human rights, fundamental freedoms and internationally accepted social policy standards and principles. The traditional gender-based division of productive and reproductive functions in the family does not reflect current realities. More and more women in all parts of the world take up productive employment outside the home. Yet they continue to have the major responsibility for reproductive, caring and household functions. A partnership between men and women on the basis of equal rights and responsibilities is the challenge for the modern family. Basic to this challenge is gender equality in the household, equal sharing of family responsibilities between men and women as well as participation of women in employment.

8. We welcome the opportunity offered by the International Year of the Family to focus attention on the numerous family issues and, in particular, on vulnerable families. Single-parent families, especially the growing number of households headed by females, are among the poorest families. The poverty level of families with disabled members is also high. Labour migration to secure a livelihood is frequently a source of family tension and disintegration, also leading to intensified responsibilities for female members. Refugee and internationally displaced families, both political and environmental, call for particular attention. The plight of people forced to flee for fear of their lives and liberty or because of the destruction of their livelihoods as a result of environmental degradation is one of the greatest tragedies of our times, which disrupts the unity and role of the family. Families affected by the HIV/AIDS virus are another group requiring attention. Family breakdown is reflected in increasing domestic violence, drug addiction, sexual abuse, child abuse and neglect. There is much to be done to raise awareness of these problems and their effects. Similarly, access to family planning information and quality services, long recognized as a basic right for all individuals, needs to be improved. The role of the family in achieving "health for all by the year 2000" and "education for all" should be further reinforced.

9. In seeking to achieve the objectives the General Assembly has set for the Year, the first goal should be to recognize the participation of families in the achievement of fundamental human development aims, such as poverty alleviation, health, nutrition, education, shelter and employment. A second goal might then be to formulate "family-sensitive" policies and help to improve national capacities to monitor their implementation. A third goal should be to encourage organizations and agencies, whether governmental or non-governmental, national or international, to assess how their decisions and actions will affect families. Without the full involvement of families and community organizations, there can be no sustained improvement of people's living conditions and quality of life. While families are targets of social welfare policies, they also contribute to the stability of rural and urban communities and, as such, should be seen as chosen partners of participatory development initiatives, including

those aimed at improving the local environment. The Year offers an opportunity to link family well-being to the goals of sustainable development.

10. Pursuant to the General Assembly's request, and within the parameters of the mandates of our organizations and agencies, we have been extending our support and cooperation for the preparation of the Year. In order to better coordinate activities and develop a system-wide approach, ad hoc inter-agency meetings have been instituted, and various kinds of multilateral activities are growing.

11. These efforts will be strengthened, as far as programmatic considerations permit, so that the objectives of the Year can be achieved. Where it is not possible to develop and implement new programmes in the context of the Year, efforts will be made to incorporate IYF elements into existing programmes. This could include introducing the concept of "family impact" in programme planning and evaluation. Existing channels of information dissemination will be used to promote the objectives of the Year. The field/country office networks will be encouraged to support national and local IYF efforts, in order to strengthen the national and local level focus of the Year.

12. The subject of the family provides a unique convergence of numerous issues of social policy, human rights and development. The International Year of the Family can contribute significantly to the consolidation of achievements in the numerous areas of direct concern to our respective programmes. It is an occasion to promote the concept of the family as the smallest democracy at the heart of society. We solicit the active participation and support of all our partners and collaborators in the observance of the International Year of the Family.